




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Howard S. Lazarus, P.E., PWLF, Director, Public Works Department 

DATE: February 20, 2015

SUBJECT: 5th Street Chilled Water Line Project

CC: See Distribution

This memorandum provides a status update on the 5th Street Chilled Water Line project. The project is currently under construction and includes two 30 inch Austin Energy chilled water lines inside an 8 foot diameter tunnel. The tunnel is approximately 40 feet deep and runs under 5th Street with access shafts near Trinity Street and Red River Street. The shaft areas are secured with safety fencing and traffic has been routed around the sites.

The project was originally scheduled to be complete by the end of February 2015. However, the project team has recently identified deficiencies with the welded connections on segments of the 30 inch chilled water lines. The deficiencies are caused by faulty construction and were approved in error by a private inspection firm hired by the city to inspect the welds. Although the full extent of the damage to the city is not yet quantified, both the contractor and the private inspection firm will be held accountable.

The project team is now developing a plan to address the welding problems. Additional information and analysis is needed before the best path forward can be determined. However, we expect the repair to add several additional months to the project duration. The underground boring method was selected for this project in order to minimize disruption to 5th Street. However, the boring method does require three access shafts, one of approximately 18 feet by 28 feet near the intersection of 5th Street and Trinity Street, and two each of approximately 11 feet by 13 feet near the intersection of 5th Street and Red River Street. These access shafts cannot feasibly be filled until the project is complete.

While we had planned for the work be complete before SXSW, the faulty welds make that impossible. The project team is working with the local businesses to accommodate access and minimize disruption to SXSW activities to the extent possible. We have identified ways to provide guided pedestrian

access and vehicle access when needed. We have also worked to reduce visual clutter, minimize the size of the work areas and reduce the height of some barricades in order to maintain the visibility of the nearby entertainment venues.

I will keep you informed as the repair plan is developed and the work progresses. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance.

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